The COMMONWEAL

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The Argentine Invitation

AT FIRST GLANCE the Farrell régime's current suggestion to the Pan American Union and to the governments of the Americas looks like an able move. For it is difficult to see how it can be accepted without virtually recognizing that régime; while if it is rejected the Argentinians will claim to have been condemned without having had an opportunity for a hearing. They are asserting even now that the United States is afraid that she is unable to prove her charges that Argentina has been collaborating with the Axis. The invitation is decidedly of the hot potato variety. It appears to be quite embarrassing to the State Department in Washington. The Pan American Union is likewise awaiting developments. Moreover, the last thing the other American governments want to do is intervene in a dispute between Argentina and the United States. A number actually admire any government that will stand up to the northern colossus, while the great majority feel that this dispute is hardly their affair. Whether the invitation proves to be a clever move or not depends largely on the adroitness with which it is met.

It is significant that a distinction is made here by Buenos Aires between foreign and domestic policies, for the latter it refuses to subject to inter-American review. Despite the belaboring of the current régime as pro-nazi, fascist and the like by our own leftish press, there is little evidence that the real idea of Farrell, Peron and Company is to bolster the fading German cause. These dictators are not ideologues, neither have they any pronounced foreign sympathies. What they want is power—first for themselves and, that implies, for Argentina. The investigation which they offer to undergo would in all probability reveal that very little effective help is now being rendered to the fighting forces of our enemies. Whatever truth there is in the stories reaching here from the Argentine underground—about the harboring of nazis refugees and nazi capital—should be viewed in a much more nationalistic framework. These refugees are reported to be training Argentine troops, organizing new arms factories, supplying needed industrial skills and generally helping the Argentine to get started on a relatively powerful military machine and the sort of self-sufficient industrial set-up which supported the Wehrmacht in Germany. That would explain the régime's insistence that internal matters must be precluded from the proposed investigation. Not that any nation is likely to invite international discussion of her own domestic policies. But the dominance of purely nationalistic aims would explain such phenomena as the recent suppression in Buenos Aires of certain German and Italian-language newspapers on the ground that they were disseminating propaganda.

Possibly a key to the situation exists in the restiveness of many Latin American diplomats over the fact that it is almost three years since the last Pan American Conference. The needs for hemisphere defense have greatly changed since then. The tentative agreements of Dumbarton Oaks, calling as they do for regional implementation, do most certainly call for discussion by the friendly Latin American governments. At present writing the most effective answer to the challenge of the Argentine military clique would seem to be to respond to the demand of the other American governments and convene a new Pan American conference. The question of Argentina would not be on the agenda, but her absence from the conference (due to continued non-recognition except by Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Ecuador) would be answer enough for the immediate impasse. If pressure is to be exerted on Buenos Aires in the future, it must be of an international sort: in the name of the United Nations, if possible. What is the use of our undertaking economic sanctions while Britain hangs onto her own economic arrangements with Argentina? What boots it to denounce the present

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government by all the black names in the book? It should be clear by now that our traditionally domineering position in Latin America should preclude us from trying to play a lone hand.

The Spirit of Isolationism

LET NO ONE suppose that, because both candidates for the Presidency have declared themselves in favor of an international organization generally and of the Dumbarton Oaks formula specifically, isolationism is dead. In a recent article Senator Ball of Minnesota vividly calls attention to a very strong and vocal isolationist spirit. His analysis was at once confirmed by newspaper dispatches from Chicago describing the campaign of the *Tribune* against "internationalism." That newspaper, which supposedly supports Governor Dewey, actually ignores his attitude on foreign policy and actively campaigns against that which he has unqualifiedly endorsed. The result has led wags to describe the *Tribune* as Norman Thomas's staunchest supporter—support, we are sure, little enjoyed by the Socialist candidate, whose opposition to the Dumbarton Oaks agreement is based entirely on his desire for a more far-reaching plan.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the only manifestation of the isolationist mentality lies in opposition to international organizations. Isolationism is a state of mind having many other ramifications. Senator Ball points out that there are bills awaiting Congressional action which would completely prohibit immigration after the war. That is another and spiritually a much more unhealthy sign of the isolationist mind and heart. It reflects an attitude the very opposite of that which has made our nation great. We have a good thing, it says, let's hog it and make it impossible for anyone else to share it. Now when a nation loses all feeling of generosity, it is a safe assumption that that nation will decay. For without generosity, life does not continue. Children are not born. A great and united national effort is impossible. And eventually others will take what that nation has refused to share.

The isolationism of the Middle West, however much one may deplore it, is understandable. The great Mississippi Valley system is so self-contained, both geographically and economically, that its inhabitants find it very difficult to realize why they need trouble themselves about the rest of the world. And since the rest of the world—or much of the rest of the world—is dirty and ignorant and poor and doesn't even speak English, the desirable thing is to ignore it. Unfortunately a score or two million people cannot ignore the hundreds of millions it dislikes. In the long run the hundreds of millions won't let it. But the attitude is understandable. What is more alarming is to find a similar attitude growing up in our seaboard areas. California has given many signs of being not merely isolationist for the United States as a whole, but for itself, California, as well. And now there is a perceptible undertone of the same feeling along the Atlantic. The immediate, superficial cause of this is probably the irritation produced by tactless and noisy refugees. But there are deeper reasons also. One might have expected Pearl Harbor to cure us of such feelings; it does not seem to have done so. Certainly it has made many Americans aware of the futility of the isolationist position; it has left an appreciable percentage unconvinced.

Russian Abstention

THE LAST minute decision of the USSR not to participate in the civil aeronautics conference in Chicago is, of course, perfectly correct from a diplomatic point of view. Russia has often taken the position that she will not participate in any international negotiations to which nations having no diplomatic relations with Moscow are party. This was the reason for the separate Chinese discussions at Dumbarton Oaks. The fact that neither Switzerland, Spain nor Portugal—all of which are sending delegates to Chicago—recognize the Soviet Government officially is therefore a perfectly valid excuse for Russian non-participation. Yet the fact that a Russian delegation had actually been sent and had got as far as Winnipeg on its way to its destination leads one to believe that there was a far more serious reason for Russia's final decision.

It is also significant that Mr. Stettinius has announced that Russian-American discussion of postwar civil aeronautics will continue, directly between these two powers. This indicates that Russia is not unwilling to have aviation problems settled, but that she prefers to settle them on a bilateral rather than a cooperative basis. It may be that the Kremlin has decided that it does not wish to show its hand until after the Chicago conference is over. After all, the nations with the greatest vital interest in the world's airways are the nations of the British Commonwealth. A prosperous commercial aviation is desirable and inevitable for the United States; for the British Commonwealth it is of life-and-death importance. For Russia, without overseas territories or dependencies, it is least important of all. Yet a system of world airways is very nearly impossible without Russian collaboration, since her territory effectively blankets all Asia. Hence it is a safe assumption that Russia intends to use her geographical assets as a bargaining point, and she obviously thinks that her position will be stronger if she totally refrains from committing herself at Chicago.

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Writing to France

FOR A long time, it has seemed a very long time, a sad time, you could write about France but you knew that no one in France would be able to read what you wrote. Everything that was written in America about France was written for Americans.

For a long time there was the debate on French policy and a great deal was written about that. It was important that Americans should not forget about the French and so a great deal was written about the French people. I am trying to remember what we wrote about during the sad months, the long years, when the French could not read what we were writing. While they were still imprisoned. There was one broad principle to which we adhered constantly; that America should not bring to France—with our armies—any Frenchmen from outside France, saying here is a good government for you to have; we have brought it to you; it is a fine patriotic government, guaranteed by us; it is the one we think you should have. There was that principle, and then there were all sorts of things about poplar trees bordering the roads, the cold dark streets of the French towns in the winter evening, the people hungry in the streets, dismayed with so many men prisoners in Germany. We put that in all the time, so that people here would remember the French and that they were suffering as we were not suffering. Some Americans remembered only the cafés in France and how the taxi horns sounded in Paris and so they were put in also. A man wanting the Americans to remember the French used everything he could.

But now if we write about France the French can read what we write. Everything is very different now because the Germans are out of France. We kept writing about France and, in a few years, in the French universities, someone looking for a thesis subject will collect all that was written in America about France. That will be all right; but just at present it does not matter. What matters at the moment is that the Germans are out of France and what has mattered all along has been that the Russians, the British and the Americans have been driving the Germans out of France. The armies have been doing that; the invasions have accomplished that.

There is no longer a French problem in the sense that there existed a problem of American policy toward France for Americans to argue about; there is France and France is free; there is a French problem for the French. Primarily, the problem for the French is one of proportion.

The French now can read what we write and obviously it would be more agreeable if they read now all that was written when we were obsessed with their gallantry, their suffering, their hopes, holding them week after week in our minds and hearts. Those pages they will not read; what we write now must be with a different purpose, in a different tone.

The French have been too much alone, too long. That is why what we hear from France seems out of scale. After the nightmare the shapes in the room are still distorted. No, there must not even be a metaphor. The French in their nation which now is free seem not to realize why it is free and by whom it has been freed. France was not freed by de Gaulle or by the Resistance movement. When France was freed by the Allied armies, France was in a different condition because of de Gaulle and because of the Resistance movement. It was a different sort of France that was freed; it was a better France that was freed because of the men and women all over France who had not despaired. Paris was not freed by the uprising in Paris, but it was a different sort of Paris than it might have been because of the men and women of Paris who rose against the Germans. So that the French do well to honor de Gaulle and the Resistance movement and all the men and women of France whose hope found expression in sacrifice and action. But it was not these people alone who were freed; the whole French nation was freed. Not only the brave were freed; the broken also. The broken have to live with the brave.

So few of us anywhere are articulate; the broken and the brave must live with the inarticulate. And that is also why this picture that the French are presenting to the world of a France divided is an artificial picture, out of scale, out of proportion. It is false because it leaves out the majority of Frenchmen. It is false because it contrasts the enervated pride of an élite with the despair of a few traitors, the fatigue of a few weak men; it is not bathed in the joy of all the French at being free, it does not show the dark sorrow of all the French looking at their country still more depopulated, still weaker than before.

I am not accusing the French of forgetting that the war is not yet won. The French have suffered enough, they have contributed enough to the war; no further contribution they may make can weigh greatly in the balance of the war against Germany. They have a right to think already of France in a world at peace—a right to prepare France again for life in a world at peace. There is so much that is broken.

But that is not what they seem to be doing. They do not seem to be looking at the world; they seem to be looking only at France—and with not too great a love. Because for Frenchmen who love France this is not a time for revenge and for concentration camps, this is not even a time for cold justice and for courtrooms; it is a time for attending to the wounds. C. G. PAULDING.

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The Co-op David

The first hundred years are the easiest

James Rorty

DURING the week of October 8 to 13, for six standard agricultural working days of eighteen hours each, some fifteen hundred delegates and visitors to the Centennial Congress of the Cooperative League of the United States overwhelmed the Hotel Morrison, in the heart of sinful Chicago, like a horde of bronzed, unmistakably rural, God-fearing and industrious crickets: gossiping in the lobbies, orating in the conference rooms, and every now and then assembling to chant in unison their faith that the twenty-eight wise weavers of Toad Lane had something.

To older habitués of the hotel the exemplary sobriety of the cooperators seemed almost excessive. The evening before the Congress opened I rode down in the elevator with an illuminated gentleman who caught my smile as I read the strange device which the comely operator had placed above her head. Apparently a memento of the lush and rowdy Democratic and Republican conventions of a few months before, it said:

"Wolfess at work. Do not disturb."

"Ish the war. Not nish attitude for girl to take," declared the gentleman gloomily as he pursued me into the lobby. There I learned that he was or claimed to be the sales manager of the International Reamer and Tunket Corporation. Would I have a drink with him? Being on my way to have a drink with a genial and helpful cooperative editor, I wouldn't, whereupon the gentleman's accumulated frustrations turned to scorn.

"No, *you* wouldn't, brother," he sneered, pointing to my convention badge. "Cooperation like hell. Cooperators lotta drips."

The criticism is a familiar one, but of doubtful validity. Sobriety, thrift, industry, prudence, fortitude—these are dull virtues, perhaps, but they do not necessarily exclude intelligence. In fact, intelligence of a sort is precisely what they add up to. But boldness and imagination are also important and leavening virtues, and it is these that the cooperative movement needs most at the moment.

Certainly the Rochdale pioneers had something. Consumer cooperation—excuse me, consumer *or purchaser* cooperation—is the most durable as well as the most democratic socio-economic gospel that our industrial civilization has thus far evolved.

There is reason to fear, however, that the first hundred years of the cooperative movement may prove to be the easiest. Even though the American co-ops have reached a total membership of two and a half million persons and will do a business of three-quarters of a billion this year, the cooperative David is still relatively a stripling in this country; whereas its jealous rival, the Goliath of monopoly capitalism, has not only been fattened by war contracts, but, scenting the economic storm that peace will bring, has seemingly developed a killer instinct. This is evidenced by the current drive of the National Tax Equality Association, which is by way of being the first formidable anti-cooperative front developed by big business.

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In meeting this drive the cooperative movement exhibits all the weaknesses of adolescence, including a breaking voice that ranges all the way from the high-pitched philosophical anarchism of Dr. James P. Warbasse, who has been the patron saint of the American movement for as long as anybody can remember, down to the earthiness of cow-country feed, seed and fertilizer magnates who like their milk rich and yellow, but prefer their ideologies a very faint pink indeed. It was the latter who insisted on writing that expanded phrase "consumer *or* purchaser cooperatives" into the new articles of incorporation adopted by National Cooperatives, which pools buying, merchandizing and some producing services for sixteen regional cooperative wholesales. They consider themselves agricultural producers first, marketers of agricultural products second, "vocacational" purchasers of farm supplies and equipment third, and consumers last and incidentally. It is almost as if that mild word "consumer" carried a subversive city slicker connotation alien to the conservative agrarian temperament, which rejects any and all urban ideological demi-tasses, meanwhile calling upon heaven—and the government—to protect the working farmer.

Yet in effect it will make little or no difference whether National Cooperatives marches under the banner of consumer or of "consumer *or* pur-

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chaser" cooperation. The point is that it must march, and march fast. And paradoxically, it is precisely these tough-minded farmers who constitute the most aggressive and rapidly expanding wing of the movement. If the co-op David answers the desperate summons of Leon Henderson and Thurman Arnold, both of whom addressed the Congress, to go forth and slay the Goliath of the scarcity-promoting cartels, it will probably be a corn-fed arm that hurls the pebble.

Judge Arnold was particularly emphatic in urging the Congress to light a fire under its belly and get going on the job of carrying over into the peace our war-time economy of full production, this being a job which neither big business nor big bureaucratic government has thus far shown any serious intention of tackling.

Will the co-ops take on the job, and if they do, is there any chance of their succeeding? Well, all one can say is that if the movement, at all its national, regional and local levels, takes seriously the directives of its Centennial Congress it will enter upon a period of vigorous, nationally-directed expansion—which may or may not be too little and too late to meet the ineluctable economic and political challenges of the postwar period.

For the progressives won most of their objectives at the Congress. On the final day they passed resolution after resolution calling for action on problems the earlier neglect of which has needlessly stunted the growth of consumer cooperation in this country for a matter of decades.

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Of course, the most important were resolutions calling for unification of the work of the League, which has been the educational arm of the movement, with that of National Cooperatives, its business arm. These resolutions were referred back to the directors of the League, who were ordered without delay to expand the budget and staff of the national organization to conduct aggressive campaigns in unorganized areas; to work closely with organized labor, which holds the key to the expansion of urban cooperatives, and with religious and educational organizations; to develop new and much-needed national services in the fields of planning, publicity, scientific research, personnel training, legislation, architecture and design, credit and finance, insurance, health, housing, burial services and movie production.

These general resolutions recognize and support a score or so of concrete projects now at various stages of planning or actual development.

For some time the UAW-CIO Consumer Division has been studying the possibilities of cooperative development among the organized automotive workers, and disseminating effective co-op propaganda through the 600 UAW-CIO locals. A bi-weekly bulletin, *Co-op Items,* is largely responsible for the increasing attention which the labor press is giving to cooperative news. Two years ago, Donald Montgomery, formerly Consumer's Counsel in the Department of Agriculture, became Consumer's Counsel for the UAW-CIO; since then the automotive workers have been made increasingly conscious of the potentialities of their rôle as organized consumers. R. J. Thomas, president of the union, and Walter Reuther, vice president, are both ardent cooperators. When the war ends the UAW-CIO is expected to foster rapid development by its locals of credit unions, cooperative insurance, medical and burial cooperatives and the cooperative purchase of fuel oil, coal and durable consumer's goods. New co-op grocery stores are likely to come last, for the reason that a labor union's activities center about the plant, rather than the homes of the workers, which are widely scattered. Relatively little cooperative activity has been developed by AFL unions, but this will come in due course if the UAW-CIO initiative succeeds.

To step up the business efficiency of the co-ops, a much needed merchandising magazine for cooperative store managers will shortly be issued by National Cooperatives and the Cooperative League of the USA.

Some time during 1945 it is expected that to the regional cooperative press, which now reaches about 750,000 readers, there will be added a national weekly which will not only carry the cooperative gospel to the 90 percent of Americans who have never heard of it, but will also defend the consumer interest in our society wherever it is affected.

In radio, taught by the League's recent battle with the commercial chains, some of the larger wholesales have already applied for FM frequencies. An FM station costs about $50,000, and by the establishment of intervening "booster" stations costing only $6,000, it would be possible at the cost of a million or so to build an effective cooperative broadcasting network, reaching from coast to coast.

In finance, the cooperators have set as their goal the establishment of a cooperative for each of the 16 regional wholesales, a central bank in Chicago serving National Cooperatives, and participation in the establishment of an International Cooperative Bank. At present there are only two cooperative "banks," serving respectively the Ohio Farm Bureau Corporation and the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association.

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Cooperation flourishes among neighbors, hence cooperative housing is one of the two keys to cooperative expansion, the other being the participation of organized labor. If the co-ops are smart enough to board the postwar housing boom in

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time, the expansion of consumer cooperation in all its forms is likely to be extraordinarily rapid. A pilot plant for such an expansion has already been provided in Altgeld Gardens, in Chicago, where a far-sighted organizing campaign sponsored by the Council for Cooperative Development resulted in the installation of a complete set of cooperative services in advance of the opening of the development.

One of the most important and relatively unused potentials of the cooperative movement is the pooling of technical services. A beginning has been made by the creation of a petroleum research group which will serve all the wholesales engaged in oil production, refining and distribution. This should, and logically will be, followed by the establishment of a food and nutrition laboratory, a cooperative fashion and textile institute for the testing of fabrics and the designing of clothes, at once smart and durable; a cooperative planning and promotion bureau.

Thus far, in America at least, consumer cooperation has appeared as a kind of sprawling, vegetative growth, over 80 percent rural, and 99 percent without benefit of adequate central planning and direction.

That it has got as far as it has during its first century is testimony to the economic and social soundness of the cooperative idea. How much more and how much faster it will grow during the next few years depends upon the vigor with which the recommendations of the Centennial Congress are followed and implemented. This in turn depends upon the quality and the quantity of the available leadership.

The daring and resourcefulness of such figures as Howard Cowden of the Consumers Cooperation Association of Kansas City and Murray Lincoln of the Ohio Farm Bureau have been fully demonstrated, but both these cooperative generals have usually marched far ahead of their armies—far ahead, even, of their boards of directors. And how many younger men—and women—with comparable abilities can be found coming up through the ranks?

Not too many, certainly, but more than is generally supposed. The more I talked to cooperative editors, managers and directors, the more I came to suspect that a great deal of cooperative light and leadership is being hidden under a bushel of shamefully stingy pay checks. In fact I am almost prepared to bet that if an arbitrary horizontal pay increase of fifty percent were instituted throughout the movement, the net surplus at the end of the year would be thereby boosted.

For too many humble and creeping years the cooperative movement has exploited the idealism and devotion of its best members. Because the cooperative way of doing business made more sense and decency than the profit-motivated commercial way, it has been able to recruit capable newspapermen, advertising men, technicians and executives who worked partly, at least, for love, and worked well, as the growth of the movement attests. That was perhaps inevitable in the pioneer period but it will be silly and perhaps suicidal if our billion dollar cooperative business continues to house its institutions in mud huts and to pay peanut salaries to its personnel.

This short-sighted parsimony has been particularly disastrous by restricting impossibly the necessary pooling, coordinating and promotional activities of the League and of National Cooperatives. In his annual report, E. R. Bowen, general secretary of the League, presented an astonishing graph showing that during the decade of 1934-43 the savings of the regional wholesales increased from a little over a quarter of a million to over six million dollars, while during the same period *the proportion of savings applied to national organization expense decreased from over three percent to less than one percent.*

Almost it would seem that the co-ops have grown, in spite of themselves, out of the humus of our decaying monopolistic economy. To put it in the metaphoric terms of Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti, whose speech was one of the bright spots of the Congress, the flesh of the cooperative movement is willing. But does its spirit yet burn fiercely enough to meet the challenge of a world which turns to it now in its bewilderment, because there is indeed very little else to turn to?

The next few years will tell. The American cooperators have held the greatest convention in their history. They have seen, possibly in time, both their danger and their magnificent historic opportunity and they have passed an admirable set of resolutions. But I too, like Monsignor Ligutti, am prepared to swear on a stack of Bibles that they have no time to lose.

Of Toads and Such

Of toads and such I loathed the sight
When all my world was hale and bright.

Now darkly crouching in the mud,
Safe from the bullet's deadly thud,

But not from deadlier insect pests,
In come my friendly warty guests

To bag them deftly on the wing.
(If they could also eat man's sting!)

No wonder Francis, while men warred,
Became the woodland creatures' bard.

From Solomons to Burma Road,
Praise God for Brothers Newt and Toad.

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ.

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The Trouble

J. F. Powers

Neither the slavers' whip nor the lynchers' rope nor the bayonet could kill our black belief.—Margaret Walker, "For My People."

WE WATCHED at the window all that afternoon. Old Gramma came out of her room and said, Now you kids get away from there this minute, and we would until she went back to her room. We could hear her old rocking chair creak when she got up or sat down and so we always ran away from the window before she came into the room to see if we were minding her good or looking out. Except once she went back to her room and didn't sit down, or maybe she did and got up easy so the chair didn't creak, or maybe we got our signals mixed, because she caught us all there and shooed us away and pulled down the green shade. The next time we were very sure she wasn't foxing us before we went to the window and lifted the shade just enough to peek out.

It was like waiting for rats as big as cats to run out from under a tenement so you could pick them off with a .22. Rats are about the biggest live game you can find in ordinary times and you see more of them than white folks in our neighborhood — in ordinary times. But the rats we waited for today were white ones and they were doing most of the shooting themselves. Sometimes some coloreds would come by with guns, but not often; they mostly had clubs. This morning we'd seen the whites catch up with a shot-in-the-leg colored and throw bricks and stones at his black head till it got all red and he was dead. I could still see the wet places in the alley. That's why we kept looking out the window. We wanted to see some whites get killed for a change, but we didn't much think we would, and I guess what we really expected to see was nothing, or maybe them killing another colored.

There was a rumpus downstairs in front and I could hear a mess of people tramping up the stairs. They kept on coming after the second floor and my sister Carrie, my twin, said maybe they were whites come to get *us* because we saw what they did to the shot-in-the-leg colored in the alley. I was scared for a minute, I admit, but when I heard their voices plainer I knew they were coloreds and it was all right, only I didn't see why there were so many of them.

Then I got scared again, only different now, empty scared all over, when they came down the hall on our floor, not stopping at anybody else's door. And then there they were, banging on our door, of all the doors in the building. They tried to come right on in, but the door was locked.

Old Gramma was the one locked it and she said she'd clean house if one of us kids so much as looked at the knob even. She threw the key down her neck somewhere and I went and told her that was our door the people were pounding on and where was the key. She reached down her neck and there was the key all right. But she didn't act much like she intended to open the door. She just stood there staring at it like it was somebody alive, saying the litany to the Blessed Virgin: *Mère du Christ, priez pour nous, Secours des chrétiens, priez.* . . . Then all of a sudden she was crying, tears were blurry in her old yellow eyes, and she put the key in the lock, her veiny hands shaking, and unlocked the door.

They had Mama in their arms. I forgot all about Old Gramma, but I guess she passed out. Anyway, she was on the floor and a couple of men were picking her up and a couple of women were saying, Put her here, put her there. I wasn't worried as much about Old Gramma as I was about Mama.

A bone, God it made me sick, had poked through the flesh of Mama's arm, all bloody like a sharp stick, and something terrible was wrong with her chest. I couldn't look any more and Carrie was screaming. That started me crying. Tears got in the way, but still I could see the baby, one-and-a-half, and brother George, four-and-a-half, and they had their eyes wideopen at what they saw and weren't crying a bit, too young to know what the hell.

They put Old Gramma in her room on the cot and closed the door on her and some old woman friend of hers that kept dipping a handkerchief in cold water and laying it on Old Gramma's head. They put Mama on the bed in the room where everybody was standing around and talking lower and lower until pretty soon they were just whispering.

Somebody came in with a doctor, a colored one, and he had a little black bag like they have in the movies. I don't think our family ever had a doctor come to see us before. Maybe before I was born Mama and Daddy did. I heard the doctor tell Mr. Purvine, that works in the same mill Daddy does, only the night shift, that he ought to set the bone, but honest to God he thought he might as well wait as he didn't want to hurt Mama if it wasn't going to make any difference.

He wasn't nearly as brisk now with his little black bag as he had been when he came in. He touched Mama's forehead a couple of times and it didn't feel good to him, I guess, because he looked tired after he did it. He held his hand on her wrist of the good arm, but I couldn't tell what this meant from his face. It mustn't have been any worse than the forehead, or maybe his face had nothing to do with what he thought and I was imagining all this from seeing the shape Mama was in. Finally he said, I'll try, and he began calling for hot water and other things and pretty soon Mama was all bandaged up white.

The doctor stepped away from Mama and over to some men and women, six or seven of them now—a lot more had gone—and asked them what had happened. He didn't ask all the questions I wanted to ask—I guess he already knew some of the answers—

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but I did find out Mama was on a streetcar coming home from the plant—Mama works now and we're saving for a cranberry farm—when the riot broke out in that section. Mr. Purvine said he called the mill and told Daddy to come home. But Mr. Purvine said he wasn't going to work tonight himself, the way the riot was spreading and the way the coloreds were getting the worst of it.

As usual, said a man with glasses on, the Negroes ought to organize and fight the thing to a finish. The doctor frowned at that. Mr. Purvine said he didn't know. But one woman and another man said that was the right idea.

If we must die, said the man with glasses on, let it not be like hogs hunted and penned in an inglorious spot! The doctor said, Yes, we all know that, but the man with glasses on went on, because the others were listening to him, and I was glad he did, because I was listening to him too: We must meet the common foe; though far outnumbered, let us still be brave, and for their thousand blows deal one death-blow! What though before us lies the open grave? Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back!!

They all thought it was fine and a woman said that was poetry and I thought if that is what it is I know what I want to be now, a poetryman. I asked the man with glasses on if that was his poetry, though I did not think it was for some reason, and the men and women all looked at me like they were surprised to see me there and like I ought not hear such things, except the man with glasses on, and he said, No, son, it was not his poetry, he wished it was, but it was Claude McKay's, a Negro, and I could find it in the public library. I decided I would go to the public library when the riot was over and it was the first time in my life I ever thought of the public library the way I did then.

They all left about this time, except the doctor and the old woman friend of Old Gramma's. She came out of Old Gramma's room, and when the door opened I saw Old Gramma lying on the cot with her eyes closed. The old woman asked me if I could work a can opener and I said, Yes, I can, and she handed me a can of vegetable soup from the shelf. She got a meal together and us kids sat down to eat. Not Carrie, though. She sat in our good chair with her legs under her and her eyes closed. Mama was sleeping and the doctor rolled up the shade at the window and looked out while we ate. I mean brother George and the baby. I couldn't eat. I just drank my glass of water. The old woman said, Here, here, I hadn't ought to let good food go to waste and was that any way to act at the table and I wasn't the first boy in the world to lose his mother.

I wondered was she crazy and I yelled I wasn't going to lose my mother and I looked to see and I was right. Mama was just sleeping and the doctor was there in case she needed him and everything was taken care of and . . . everything. The doctor didn't even turn away from the window when I yelled at the old woman and I thought at least he'd say I'd wake my mother up shouting that way, or maybe that I was right and the old woman was wrong. I got up from the table and stood by the doctor at the window. He only stayed there a minute more then and went over to feel Mama's wrist again. He did not touch her forehead this time.

Old Gramma came out of her room and said to me, Was that you raising so much cain in here, boy? I said, Yes, it was, and just when I was going to tell her what the old woman said about losing Mama I couldn't. I didn't want to hear it out loud again. I didn't even want to think it in my mind. Old Gramma went over and gazed down at Mama. She turned away quickly and told the old woman, Please, I'll just have a cup of hot water, that's all, I'm so upset. Then she went over to the doctor by the window and whispered something to him and he whispered something back and it must've been only one or two words, because he was looking out the window the next moment.

Old Gramma said she'd be back in a minute and went out the door and slipslapping down the hall. I went to the window, the evening sun was going down, and I saw Old Gramma come out the back entrance of our building. She crossed the alley and went in the back door of the grocerystore.

A lot of racket cut loose about a block up the alley. It was still empty, though. Old Gramma came out of the grocerystore with something in a brown bag. She stopped in the middle of the alley and seemed to be watching the orange evening sun going down behind the buildings. The sun got in her hair and somehow under her skin kind of and it did a wonderful thing to her. She looked so young for a moment that I saw Mama in her, both of them beautiful New Orleans ladies.

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The racket cut loose again, nearer now, and a pack of men came running down the alley, about three dozen whites chasing two coloreds. One of the whites was blowing a bugle—*tan tivvy tan tivvy tan tivvy*—like the white folks do when they go foxhunting in the movies or Virginia. I looked down, quick, to see if Old Gramma had enough sense to come inside and I guess she did because she wasn't there. The two coloreds ran between two buildings, the white ran after them and then the alley was quiet again. Old Gramma stepped out and I watched her stoop and pick up the brown bag that she had dropped before.

Another big noise made her drop it again. A whole smear of men swarmed out of the used-car lot and came galloping down the alley like wild buffalos. Old Gramma scooted inside our building and the brown bag stayed there in the alley. This time I couldn't believe my eyes, I saw what I thought I'd never see, I saw what us kids had been waiting to see ever since the riot broke out—a white man that was fixing to get himself nice and killed. A white man running—running, God Almighty, from about a million coloreds. And he was the one with the tan-tivvy bugle too. I hoped the coloreds would do the job up right.

The closer the white man came the worse it got for him, because the alley comes to a dead end when it hits our building. All at once, I don't know why, I was praying for that fool white man with the bugle to get away. But I didn't think he had a Chinaman's chance, the way he was going now, and maybe that's what made me pray for him.

Then he did a smart thing. He whipped the bugle over his shoulder like you do with a horseshoe for good

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luck and it hit the first colored behind him smack in the head, knocking him out, and that slowed up the others. The white man turned into the junkyard behind the furniture warehouse and the Victory Ballroom. Another smart thing, if he used his head. The space between the warehouse and the Victory is just wide enough for a man to run through. It's a long piece to the street, but if he made it there he'd be safe probably.

The long passageway must've looked too narrow to him, though, because the fool came rushing around the garage next to our building. For a moment he was the only one in the alley. The coloreds had followed him through the junkyard and probably got themselves all tangled up in garbage cans and rusty bed springs and ashpiles. But the white man was a goner just the same. In a minute they'd be coming for him for real. He'd have to run the length of the alley again to get away and the coloreds have got the best legs.

Then Old Gramma opened our back door and saved him.

I was very glad for the white man until suddenly I remembered poor Mama all broken to pieces on the bed and then I was sorry Old Gramma did it. The next moment I was glad again that she did. I understood now I did not care one way or the other about the white man. Now I was thinking of Mama—not of myself. I did not see what difference it could make to Mama if the white man lived or died. It only had something to do with us and him.

Then I got hold of a very strange idea. I told myself the trouble is somebody gets cheated or insulted or killed and everybody else tries to make it come out even by cheating or insulting or killing the cheaters and insulters and killers. Only they never do. I did not think they ever would. I told myself that I had a very big idea there and when the riot was over I would go to the public library and sit in the reading room and think about it. Or I would speak to Old Gramma about it, because it seemed like she had the same big idea and like she had had it a long time too.

The doctor was standing by me at the window all the time. He said nothing about what Old Gramma did, and now he stepped away from the window and so did I. I guess he felt the same way I did about the white man and that's why he stepped away from the window. The big idea again. He was afraid the coloreds down below would yell up at us did we see the white man pass by. The coloreds were crazy mad all right. One of them had the white man's bugle and he banged on our door with it. I was worried Old Gramma had forgot to lock it and they might walk right in and that would be the end of the white man and the big idea.

But Old Gramma pulled another fast one. She ran out into the alley and pointed her old yellow finger in about three wrong directions. In a second the alley was quiet and empty, except for Old Gramma. She walked slowly over against our building, where somebody had kicked the brown bag, and picked it up.

Old Gramma brought the white man right into our room, told him to sit down and poured herself a cup of hot water. She sipped it and said the white man could leave whenever he wanted to, but it might be better to wait a bit. The white man said he was much obliged, he hated to give us any trouble, and Oh, oh, is somebody sick over there, when he saw Mama, and that he'd just been passing by when a hundred nig—when he was attacked.

Old Gramma sipped her hot water. The doctor turned away from the window and said, Here they come again, took another look, and said, No, they're going back. He went over to Mama and held her wrist. I could tell nothing about her from his face. She was sleeping just the same. The doctor asked the white man, still standing, to sit down. Carrie only opened her eyes once and closed them. She hadn't changed her position in the good chair. Brother George and the baby stood in a corner with their eyes on the white man. The baby's legs buckled then—she'd only been walking about a week—and she collapsed softly to the floor. She worked her way up again without taking her eyes off the white man. He even looked funny and out of place to me in our room. I guess the man for the rent and Father Egan were the only white people come to see us since I could remember and now it was only the man for the rent since Father Egan died.

The doctor asked the white man did he work or own a business in this neighborhood. The white man said, No, glancing down at his feet, no, he just happened to be passing by when he was suddenly attacked like he said before. The doctor told Old Gramma she might wash Mama's face and neck again with warm water.

There was noise again in the alley, windows breaking and fences being pushed over. The doctor said, You could leave now, to the white man, it's a white mob this time, you'd be safe.

No, the white man said, I should say not, I wouldn't be seen with them, they're as bad as the others almost.

It is quite possible, the doctor said.

Old Gramma asked the white man if he would like a cup of tea.

Tea? No, he said, I don't drink tea, I didn't know you drank it.

I didn't know you knew her, the doctor said, looking at Old Gramma and the white man.

You colored folks, I mean, the white said, Americans, I mean. Me, I don't drink tea, always considered it an English drink and bad for the kidneys.

The doctor did not answer. Old Gramma brought him a cup of tea.

And then Daddy came in. He ran over to Mama and fell down on his knees like he was dead, like seeing Mama with her arm broke and her chest so pushed in killed him on the spot. He lifted his face from the bed and kissed Mama on the lips; and then, Daddy, I could see, was crying, the strongest man in the world was crying with tears in his big dark eyes and coming down the side of his big hard face. Mama called him her John Henry sometimes and there he was, her John Henry, the strongest man, black or white, in the whole damn world, crying.

He put his head down on the bed again. Nobody in the room moved until the baby toddled over to Daddy and patted him on the ear like she wanted to play the games those two make up with her little hands and his big ears and eyes and nose. But Daddy didn't move or say anything, if he even knew she was there, and the baby got a blank look in her eyes and walked away from Daddy and sat down, *plump,* on the floor across the room, staring at Daddy and the white man, back and forth, Daddy and the white man.

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Daddy got up after a while and walked very slowly across the room and got himself a drink of water at the sink. For the first time he noticed the white man in the room. Who's he, he said, who's he? None of us said anything. Who the hell's he? Daddy wanted to know, thunder in his throat like there always is when he's extra mad or happy.

The doctor said the white man was Mr. Gorman and went over to Daddy and told him something in a low voice.

Innocent! What's he doing in this neighborhood then? Daddy said, loud as before, What's an *innocent* white man doing in this neighborhood now, answer me that! He looked at all of us in the room and none of us that knew what the white man was doing in this neighborhood wanted to explain to Daddy. Old Gramma and the doctor and me, none of us that knew, would tell.

I was just passing by, the white man said, as they can tell you.

The scared way he said it almost made me laugh. Was this a white *man,* I asked myself. Alongside Daddy's voice the white man's sounded plain foolish and weak, a little old pink tug squeaking at a big brown ocean liner about the right of way. Daddy seemed to forget all about him and began asking the doctor a lot of questions about Mama in a hoarse whisper I couldn't hear very well. Daddy's face got harder and harder and it didn't look like he'd ever crack a smile or shed a tear or anything soft again. Just hard, it got, hard as four spikes.

Old Gramma came and stood by Daddy's side and said she had called the priest when she was downstairs a while ago getting some candles. She was worried that the candles weren't blessed ones. She opened the brown bag then and that's what was inside, two white candles. I didn't know grocerystores carried them.

Old Gramma went to her room and took down the picture of the Sacred Heart all bleeding and put it on the little table by Mama's bed and set the candles in sticks on each side of it. She lit the candles and it made the Sacred Heart, punctured by the wreath of thorns, look bloodier than ever and made me think of that song, To Jesus' Heart All Burning, the kids sing at Our Saviour's on Sundays.

The white man went up to the doctor and said, I'm a Catholic too. But the doctor didn't say anything back, only nodded. He probably wasn't one himself, I thought, not many of the race are. Our family wouldn't be if Old Gramma and Mama didn't come from New Orleans, where Catholics are thicker than flies or Baptists.

Daddy got up from the table and said to the white man, So help me God, mister, I'll kill you in this room if my wife dies! The baby started crying and the doctor went to Daddy's side and turned him away from the white man and it wasn't hard to do because now Daddy was kind of limp and didn't look like he remembered anything about the white man or what he said he'd do to him if Mama . . . or anything.

I'll bet the priest won't show up, Daddy said.

The priest will come, Old Gramma said, the priest will always come when you need him, just wait. Her old lips were praying in French.

I hoped he would come like Old Gramma said, but I wasn't so sure. Some of the priests weren't much different from anybody else. They knew how to keep their necks in. Daddy said to Mama once if you only wanted to hear about social justice you could turn on the radio or go to the nearest stadium on the Fourth of July and there'd be an old white man in a new black suit saying it was a good thing and everybody ought to get some and if they'd just kick in more they might and anyway they'd be saved. One came to Our Saviour's last year and Father Egan said this is our new assistant and the next Sunday our new assistant was gone—poor health. But Daddy said he was transferred to a church in a white neighborhood because he couldn't stand to save black souls. Father Egan would've come a-flying, riot or no riot, but he was dead now and we didn't know much about the one that took his place.

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Then he came, by God, the priest from Our Saviour's came to our room while the riot was going on. Old Gramma got all excited and said over and over she knew the priest would come. He was kind of young and skinny and pale, even for a white man, and he said, I'm Father Crowe, to everybody in the room and looked around to see who was who.

The doctor introduced himself and said Old Gramma was Old Gramma, Daddy was Daddy, we were the children, that was Mr. Gorman, who was just passing by, and over there was poor Mama. He missed Old Gramma's old woman friend; I guess he didn't know what to call her. The priest went over and took a look at Mama and nodded to the doctor and they went into Old Gramma's room together. The priest had a little black bag too and he took it with him. I supose he was getting ready to give Mama Extreme Unction. I didn't think they would wake her up for Confession or Holy Communion, she was so weak and needed the rest.

Daddy got up mad as a bull from the table and said, Remember what I said, mister, to the white man.

But why me, the white man asked, just because I'm white?

Daddy looked over at Mama on the bed and said, Yeah, just because you're white, yeah, that's why. . . . Old Gramma took Daddy by the arm and steered him over to the table again and he sat down.

The priest and the doctor came out of Old Gramma's room and right away the priest faced the white man, like they'd been talking about him in Old Gramma's room, and asked him why he didn't go home. The white man said he'd heard some shouting in the alley a while ago that didn't sound so good to him and he didn't think it was safe yet and that was why.

I see, the priest said.

I'm a Catholic too, Father, the white man said.

That's the trouble, the priest said.

The priest took some cotton from his little black bag, dipped his fingers in holy oil and made the sign of the cross on Mama's eyes, nose, ears, mouth and hands, rubbing the oil off with the cotton, and said prayers in Latin all the time he was doing it.

I want you all to kneel down now, the priest said, and we'll say a rosary. But we musn't say it too loud because she is sleeping.

We all knelt down except the baby and Carrie. Carrie said she'd never kneel down to God again. Now Carrie, Old Gramma said, almost crying. She told Carrie it

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was for poor Mama and wouldn't Carrie kneel down if it was for poor Mama?

No! Carrie said, it must be a white God too! Then she began crying and she did kneel down after all.

Even the white man knelt down and the doctor and the old woman friend of Old Gramma's, a solid Baptist if I ever saw one, and we all said the rosary of the five sorrowful mysteries.

Afterwards the white man said to the priest, Do you mind if I leave when you do Father? The priest didn't answer and the white man said, I think I'll be leaving now, Father, I wonder if you'd be going my way?

The priest finally said, All right, all right, come along, you won't be the first one to hide behind a Roman collar.

The white man said, I'm sure I don't know what you mean by that, Father. The priest didn't hear him, I guess, or want to explain, because he went over to Mama's bed.

The priest knelt once more by Mama and said a prayer in Latin out loud and made the sign of the cross over Mama: *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.* He looked closer at Mama and motioned to the doctor. The doctor stepped over to the bed, felt Mama's wrist, put his head to her chest, where it wasn't pushed in, and stood up slowly.

Daddy and all of us had been watching the doctor when the priest motioned him over and now Daddy got up from the table, kicking the chair over he got up so fast, and ran to the bed. He sank, shaking all over, to his knees, and I believe he must've been crying again, although I thought he never would again and his head was down and I couldn't see for sure.

I began to get an awful bulging pain in my stomach. The doctor left the bed and grabbed the white man by the arm and was taking him to the door when Daddy jumped up, like he knew where they were going, and said, Wait a minute, mister!

The doctor and the white man stopped at the door. Daddy walked draggily over to them and stood in front of the white man, took a deep breath, and said in the stillest kind of whisper, I wouldn't touch you. That was all. He moved slowly back to Mama's bed and his big shoulders were sagged down like I never saw them before.

Old Gramma said *Jésus!* and stumbled down on her knees by Mama. Then the awful bulging pain in my stomach exploded and I knew that Mama wasn't just sleeping now and I couldn't breathe for a long while and then when I finally could I was crying like the baby and brother George and so was Carrie.

Communications

EZRA POUND

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Oliver Evans's article on Ezra Pound is just the sort of cheap journalism we don't expect to find in THE COMMONWEAL. It is even more offensive than was his slick, superficial piece on the Vanderbilt poets.

Much may be forgiven him on the grounds of ignorance and youth. It is very unlikely that he has ever really read Pound, or if he has, it is even more unlikely that he possesses the taste and judgment to appreciate his real worth. I am not referring to the "Cantos," but to the many first-class poems which one can find among Pound's works, the best representation of which is "Selected Poems," edited with an introduction by T. S. Eliot, and published by Faber & Gwyer, Ltd., London. Beyond the poetry, there is the very solid service (which Mr. Evans seems to regard as part of an act) Pound did some of the leading writers of our time, in getting their works published and in various ways encouraging and inspiring them. Moreover, a good many original and talented young men owed their start to him.

Since Mr. Evans is so lacking in appreciation of the poet and so blind to any good in the man (or is it after all only that Mr. Evans prefers not to see clearly during war-time?), it is not surprising that Pound's present position should excite in him only amusement and contempt. In one more sensible of the man's gifts, accomplishments, and former worth, though he can only condemn the whole course of his career in Italy, which proceeded without deviation to his present predicament, it awakes a real sense of tragedy.

J. J. COHANE, JR.

BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES

Orleans, Mass.

TO the Editors: It would have been nice if John Cort had seen fit to say a little more about J. F. Powers's story "Lions, Hearts, Leaping Does," when he reviewed "The Best American Short Stories." That was no time to exercise a seemly diffidence because the story was a Catholic one and the review appeared in a Catholic paper. It was the time to say that with that one story Powers established himself not only as one of the very best of contemporary writers but as the only Catholic on this continent capable of writing major fiction.

Jennings Rice, reviewing the same book in the *Herald Tribune,* ignored the story, as most secular reviewers do with stories written on a profoundly religious theme. The most charitable thing to say of people like Mr. Rice and the ladies who misinterpret Graham Greene is that they simply don't know what such stories are all about. It is, however, one of the functions by whose almost exclusive exercise THE COMMONWEAL justifies its existence, to "discover" such stories; make their importance manifest to the still embryonic Catholic mind in this country; and indicate their roots and influences, ancient and modern.

Instead of rambling on at quite such length about one of Carson McCullers's usual excursions into pathologically pitiful sex relationships, Mr. Cort might have written a few sentences like this about the Powers story: It is the first profound and distinguished short story written by an American Catholic. It might even be a great story. In it, for the first time in this country, we find a profound love and knowledge of God and the Church married in a distinguished prose to a profound love and knowledge of human beings. What Mr. Huxley and Mr. Maugham have said partially in their recent novels, Mr. Powers has said completely in this, his first short story. It is a happening over which the literate in general might take pride and those who have despaired of a commensurate Catholic fiction in this country, take hope.

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To this one might add a few details about the curious phenomenon this story proved to be: How people all over the country sent to friends copies of the obscure little magazine (*Accent*) it appeared in, asking if they had ever read such a story. William Fifield (also in this edition of the "Best Short Stories") sent me one from California. Sister Mariella Gable, the Benedictine, was sent a copy from New Mexico, and is publishing another story by Mr. Powers in her next anthology. At least half a dozen people in widely separated parts of the country had their attention called to this story by—in each instance—more than one party. Friends wrote letters to each other, asking the other if he had read this story and, in a very quiet and smiling way, at last taking heart that for the first time American Catholics had a commensurate spokesman in the field of fiction. But all Mr. Cort can give us is a lo and behold, which, while something, is not enough.

H. S.

DEMOCRACY AND THE PURISTS

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: The penetrating and timely analysis by Yves Simon on "Democracy and the Purists" deserves hearty commendation. The thought occurs to me that the purist attitude toward political democracy finds its blood brother in the approach of the perfectionist (I prefer his terms) to similar problems in the socio-economic order. It is becoming a truism at least among the well-disposed that the hope for industrial democracy, and of a consequence real political self-government, lies in the development of a free and mature labor movement under the guidance and inspiration of labor statesmen. And yet outside the labor movement, I can find no greater hindrance to that growth than this "angel of light," the Perfectionist.

The Perfectionist is a bundle of contradictions. If he is a Catholic, he gives lip service to the social encyclicals, but these must be interpreted by himself alone. He protests that he is a man of principle, although at times he is not sure what principles he is defending. Generous as he may be in his appeal for reform, he hopes in his heart that reform occurs long after the marrow of his bones becomes the playground for subterranean insect life. He does not doubt the uninformed sincerity of those with whom he disagrees, but he wastes no time in bestowing upon them the dubious title of "hyphenated Catholics." A cynic in many respects, he swallows most gullibly the "meaty" doctrines and pronouncements of those "good men" who feel that the four gospels have been supplanted and outmoded by the "Wealth of Nations." And paradoxically, while forestalling attempts at reform in this country on the grounds that they limit freedom (sic), he has unlimited excuse for Franco, sympathetic understanding for Salazar, and blushes only when he remembers that Hitler and Mussolini let him down.

The perfectionist is an "ism" man. Shibboleths fall readily from his lips, while individuals who speak on the social question are pigeon-holed into either of two categories, communist or anti-communist. I doubt very much whether he has the facts and principles to distinguish a Marxian Socialist from a right wing Socialist, a Christian Democrat from a liberal-progressive, and any or all of them from the follower of papal teaching.

Perfectionism is that insidious state of mind which expects the desired utopia to arrive in one fell swoop, quietly, painlessly, and above all without effort. Needless to say, this mentality is not the possession of those critics of political or economic democracy who are motivated by a desire to go forward, who live by no double standard, and whose labors would construct rather than obstruct, preserving the whole while doctoring the ailing part.

Periodic application of the criteria of Yves Simon would be appreciated by all of us. REV. GEORGE A. KELLY.

The Stage & Screen

Violet

ONE REASON, I suppose, for the tiresome overemphasis on precocious adolescence on our stage for the past few seasons will be because the subject seems to allow for a good bit of activity allied to no thought at all. Given a female brat of some ten to fifteen years, fatuously built into a family "problem child" and heavily cavorting through a carefully inexpensive one-set family household, and you are apt to be able to manage a good many entrances and exits to no reasonable purpose. On the other hand, given anyone (male or female) over twenty-three years of age and alive, and there is a slight chance that you may have to deal with at least some kind of recognizable emotion, some communication of idea, maybe some speculation, maybe some decision, maybe (just possibly) some mention of the present war. This present juvenile shambles struck me as about the dreariest of the lot. Since I was unable to penetrate the diction of Miss Pat Hitchcock (the infant lead) to the extent of being able to understand what she had to say, and since I found her not very graceful nor otherwise rewarding to watch, and since she was, so to speak, the whole show, I can only say that the performance seemed to me exactly as vacant as the old humdrum situation it projected. This together with the fact that two of my favorite actresses, Doro Merande and Paula Trueman, were completely wasted therein. (*At the Belasco.*)

Snafu

MORE OF the same although this time, I should say, nimbly done. After a season, one gets used to the system of sneaking the wobbly in before the sure-fire item when both plays compass the same material. Last week, for instance, we had the unfortunate "Meet a Body" before the equally unfortunate although more promising "Visitor": both mysteries. This week, the above mentioned doldrum heralded this juvenile comedy (*hit,* I judge) and if the boredom of reviewing two plays with the same subject matter in one week should seem excessive to the critic, certainly it is no secret that the theater is not being run for the critics—or not for this one. Every

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so often George Abbott's hopscotch direction really graces a script and augments it, and this is a case in point. Louis Solomon's and Harold Buchman's play will have been, I think, little enough in hand—beyond the neat exposition of a fairly intriguing idea with a number of superfluous characters jamming its last act—but in performance it is one long somersault and produced what is generally known as stitches in the house. Outlining the possibilities of the return to the bosom of his suburban California family of a fifteen-year-old Pacific War Veteran (a sergeant!)—"because his mama wanted him"—the business includes some romance, some mystery, some satire, no sense, much nonsense, endless misunderstandings and a happy ending; the crucial juvenile presenting a picture of what one imagines to be the ideal soldier: young, tough, flexible, teachable, uneducated, with no dream dept. The pace of the proceedings is nervous, lots of attractive young people handle it expertly, there is (at least for those sitting on the right of the house) a beautiful and various single setting by John Root: it's nice. If one's overall conclusion is that it is merely marking time on a theme of global proportions, at least it does so *prestissimo*.

Billy Redfields boy I thought very good. He has intensity, ingratiating looks and the kind of control which can build an hazardous second-act curtain from a small gesture. All Abbott's youngsters can move; on the other hand (from Mr. Redfield's I mean) Dort Clark's leapfrogging attack as a brother soldier seemed to me distorted and disturbing. Bethel Leslie proved the ideal ingénue; pretty, competent, medium. Both Enid Markey as an aunt and Eugenia Dealrova as a Mexican maid seemed vastly exaggerated, although Miss Markey was, as always, articulate. I don't appreciate Elsbeth Eric's consistently tragic mask, often at variance with her lines; and although Russell Hardie reminded me vocally of nothing so much as a sort of demi-Durante, he made his every point. Also a word for the staff of the Hudson whom I believe Lindsay and Crouse to have cast as carefully as "Arsenic." Not only do decorous girls pass you gleaming water on tiered trays but everyone bustles with smiles and skill. It is true the house is now furnished with those springing seats that bite but, as everyone knows, these are easily tamed by constant use so the problem is already being solved. (*At the Hudson.*)

The Perfect Marriage

AS PLAINLY as possible this dreary over-and-over discussion of a modern marriage adds up to something like this: Act I—a wife and her husband decide they are no longer in love; Act II—they decide to get a divorce; Act III—they decide they *are* in love, *not* to get a divorce, and the whole business begins all over again. As illuminating as it sounds, the protagonists, Miriam Hopkins and Victor Jory, cannot be said to shine, although Valentina has zealously dressed the former to the audible envy of every woman in the house. I would put down Oliver Smith's frank copy of Stewart Chaney's "Voice of the Turtle" setting as merely a job, and one certainly written into the dismal Samson Raphaelson script. (*At the Ethel Barrymore.*)

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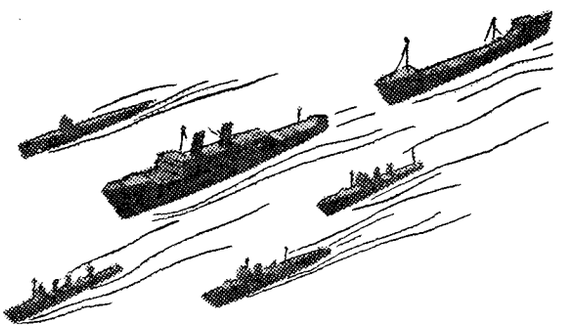

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NOTE: This column's apologies to Miss Dorrit Kelton of "The Visitor" whose name became confused with that of the ingénue, Miss Anna Minot, in my review of the production. Miss Kelton plays the Maid of the piece as exactly, I am sure, as possible. I only wish I could be as accurate. KAPPO PHELAN.

Giant's Unlimited Strength

THE LOCALE of King Vidor's new epic of America extends from coast to coast. This film was to have been called "America," but the finished opus is now known as *"An American Romance"*—and the noun in the title is as much a key to the picture as the adjectives. However, for all its skimming over the surface (and it does a lot of hurrying across some aspects of Americana in its 151 minutes' running time) "An American Romance" is still an epic. In broad strokes it tells the story of Stefan Dangosbiblichek who arrived in New York from Moravia in the '90s and walked to the Mesabi Iron Range in Minnesota. Walked, mind you!

There, Steve (for his name soon became Steve Dangos) worked in the mines, studied English with a pretty schoolteacher, learned from an encyclopedia about the making of steel. Then he sailed as a stowaway on an ore boat to Northern Indiana where he went to work in the steel mills. Determined, ambitious, imitative, Steve rose to the foreman's job. He sent for Anna, the Minnesota schoolteacher, married her, raised a family—a girl, and four boys named after presidents. By the time the oldest son was graduating from high school, Steve had bought an automobile and was tinkering with its works. When this son went off to the war in 1918 Steve promised to take out his citizenship papers. And on the day that Steve and Anna heard of their son's death, Steve kept the promise.

Later, the scene changed to Detroit where Steve's automobile became a success and Steve became a tycoon whose plant turnd out 300 cars a day. But success and riches soured for Steve when his workers organized. He could not understand the need for a union in a plant where he was the head—he, honest Steve Dangos who showed a paternal interest in all his workers. The labor organizers patiently explained that the men wanted security no matter who was in the front office. "It's not your company," Steve replied in anger, "I owe my success to no man." Steve became more stubborn and bitter when the board of directors voted to recognize the union. The board was made up of his old and close friends; and Steve's own son was among the union organizers.

Heartsick and petulant, Steve Dangos withdrew from his company and went with his wife on a long automobile journey that included the points of interest from Detroit to California. On the west coast, Steve and Anna lived quietly in retirement until World War II. Then Steve rejoined his old partners and son who were turning out planes. And the film ends with a shot of many planes in the sky.

This short synopsis by no means gives the full flavor of "An American Romance." For Producer-Director Vidor has used the thin outline of a rags-to-riches story to give us a panoramic view of America. Beautifully photographed in technicolor, the picture includes scenes from New York to Minnesota, from the mid-west to California and it stops long enough to give us four lengthy sequences on coal mining, steel milling, the making of an automobile and the making of a plane from start to finish. These scenes would slow up the plot if there were any plot, but as the episodic picture works out they are as much a part of the narrative as the details about Steve Dangos. Except for the principals, characterization is slighted in this saga of America. Brian Donlevy is excellent in his portrayal of the central figure: the immigrant, the hard worker, the father, the proud and stubborn self-made man. Grouped around him are: Ann Richards as the wife, Walter Abel as the good friend who becomes his business partner, John Qualen as the relative who welcomes him to Minnesota, Horace McNally as his son who disappoints him by representing labor. The other players have small rôles in a cast that keeps changing as often as the locale and period.

Vidor by no means attempts to tell the story of all America. The exigencies of the South, the city and the farm are wisely omitted by the film that pretends to be no more than *an* American romance. Vidor probably found himself in enough hot water in discussing the labor question—a subject that films religiously avoid. The episodes concerning labor are handled fairly, but will likely not please either side. As far as one can see, Steve is never reconciled to unions; the film neither condemns nor condones him. What "An American Romance" does impress upon its audience is this country's vast size and beauty as well as its unbounded opportunities for growth in the past.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Editors' Choice

BASES OVERSEAS. *George Weller. Harcourt.* $3.50.

NOW WITH THE MORNING STAR. *Thomas Kernan. Scribners.* $2.50.

Caught Off Base

IN THE various self-questionings induced by involvement in two world wars within a quarter century the American people should give major consideration to the query, why in both instances we found ourselves in so poor a strategic position? Why is this present war so protracted despite our overwhelming superiority in matériel? It is because we had to come from so far behind; we were attacked when nearly all was lost for our allies. That much of this delay could have been prevented, and many of our young lives spared, is one burden of a block-busting book by George Weller, "Bases Overseas."

Up to now the talk about retaining the bases which we have built in all sectors of the globe has been largely in economic terms. Those who favor it have spoken something like this: "Why should bases built by American

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effort, workers and material be given over to somebody else when the war is over? We built and paid for the things and we ought to keep them." However, this is not the point. The reason for hanging on to the bases which we now have and for seeking new ones in addition is purely strategic. The question might better be: "Why should we periodically expend our material substance and our brave young lives to defend what could be far more easily held through a well-coordinated system of overseas bases?"

Make no mistake about it, this is a hard-boiled book. But, whatever one's predispositions, it raises considerations which must be faced by any man intent on the maintenance of peace and justice in the world. The pity is that Mr. Weller's questions received so little notice in the interval between the wars. Few peace advocates now refuse to admit that force has to have a place in their considerations. The alternative is not between a world organization and a well-defended series of bases. For if the United States is to undertake policing in the post-war world, we must have effective means of doing so.

A good example of the author's realism is his discussion of the way after the last war Britain and Japan divided between them and the Dominions the German islands in the Pacific. Not that it had not all been arranged beforehand, nor that Oswald Garrison Villard had not made sure that this was known to every American Congressman. This deal, in which we quietly acquiesced, was so sweeping as to cut us off from the Philippine Islands and made our present task in the Pacific incalculably more difficult. And in the future what we need in the Pacific, according to the author, is not a heavily fortified Guam or Singapore but a dozen or more strategically placed tiny bases or Corregidors. In the West he recommends a whole string of bases along Europe's Mediterranean shore, the Iberian Peninsula, the North African coast—and in the North the continuance of our Greenland and Iceland bases plus a major base between the North and Baltic Seas.

"Bases Overseas" is filled with citations from such American geopoliticians as Homer Lea, Nicholas Spykman, and Admiral Mahan. It would require a thoroughly competent expert to say for sure whether the political complications involved in securing and maintaining a worldwide system of bases as extensive as Mr. Weller advises would not lead to greater difficulties than those he seeks to obviate. But his historical analysis is so convincing, i.e., in such matters as the rôle played by Cyprus, Gibraltar and Malta in Rommel's North African defeat, that it is impossible to read his book without admitting that there is a great deal in what he says. Possibly the minimum overseas base program which he brings forward should be our aim.

Mr. Weller has seen this war in many of its phases and he has thought out the base problem in great detail. He finds that the ideal base is one which is separated by water or in some other fashion from the native population, for the mingling of the soldiery with these civilians is never happy. He recognizes that the maintenance of foreign bases involves a certain loss of sovereignty in the areas in question, but holds that the alien rule of a small handful of a population weighs little against the protection which the maintenance of such a base affords the great bulk of nearby people. It is all too obvious that the Dutch, the Australians and the New Zealanders, even acting with the most efficient coordination, are too outnumbered to resist Japan. Are not bases, then, an answer in the Pacific? And do not bases in like manner have a due place in the protection of the smaller Western nations? These are questions which cannot easily be brushed aside. In the last analysis we went to war this time, as in 1917, because we felt our own security was threatened. How can we win this war if we neglect important steps which will assure our future peace and security? Perhaps it really is time, in the interests of all peace-loving peoples as well as in our own, to give up relying solely on our magic powers of production. For this we pay too high a price. Only by making sure that our forces can be permanently placed in the strategic places where they are needed—and accepting the responsibilities involved in keeping up these bases—can we attain the things for which we fight. That is Mr. Weller's message and it is worth repeating. He is a good novelist and a fine reporter; his challenge to our makers of foreign policy is presented with decided literary skill.

The Flame Still Burns

WHEN the forces of evil have clamped down upon a country with its thousands of individual communities, there is temporarily little which those who resist in their hearts can do about it. At least in current times when all but the deepest underground means of communication are in the hands of a dictator and his henchmen. Only in the privacy of one's room, in the shrine of one's own heart—and then with the greatest difficulty—can human aspirations for a rebirth of freedom maintain themselves and grow.

That is why Thomas Kernan's short novel, "Now with the Morning Star," unpretentious as it is, seems peculiarly satisfying. For it deals with a Brother Nicholas who has been exiled from a confiscated Cistercian Monastery and then by a strange quirk of Providence imprisoned by the nazis in the same monastery building and eventually even in his own cell. In such surroundings it became relatively simple to relive part of his former life. And Brother Nicholas's imprisonment is consoled by the profound realization that through him the century-old life of the Maria-Morgenstern Monastery continues on. His humble, secret prayer-life contains the seed that one day will again blossom forth into the full flower of Cistercian life .

It is a simple story, simply told, and one which sustains unflagging interest. It begins with the seizure of the monastery by the nazis, the forcible dissolution of the Maria-Morgenstern community and the dispersal of its members. Quite convincing are the accounts of Brother Nicholas's various attempts to adjust himself to the hard conditions of the outside world. Ultimately his work as a shepherd for a mountainside sanitarium conducted by nuns near the Swiss border entails considerable excitement and responsibility; it leads eventually to his arrest. Mr. Kernan has succeeded in making it all seem quite real.

More Books of the Week

The Beards' Basic History of the United States. Charles and Mary Beard. New Home Library. 69c.

TO WRITE the history of the United States in a compressed fashion, running from colonial occupation to present peace plans, is a great feat. That it involves over-simplification is both a natural thing and one of its defects and its dangers. For instance to the economics of our Constitutional Convention Charles Beard once

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devoted a whole and celebrated book. To the economic background of Jeffersonianism he devoted another. One of the great chapters in "The Rise of American Civilization"—"The Second Revolution"—is a fascinating and provocative piece of historical analysis. Some of the interpretations in the chapters, in the same book, dealing with the origins of the Mexican and Spanish-American wars, are still matters of debate. But none of the details, and few of the ideas in these books and chapters find their way past the threshold of this new history house. The Beards's thesis about the Mexican and Spanish-American wars, for example, is missing from this book. The Constitutional Convention is almost conventionally treated.

It is an interesting speculation whether the required compression of a work of this kind accounts for the omissions; or whether they represent a mental divorce on the old ground of incompatibility. To students of American history it should prove a stimulating speculation. To the audience for whom the book is meant it will probably make no difference at all.

There is no one else in the United States as fully equipped to do this kind of work as are the Beards. There is no one whose knowledge is so encyclopedic; no one who can be so free of the fetters of detail; none whose sweep and command of interpretation and generalization is so great. And, especially, there is no one who can write history with such softened asperity and astringent eloquence. Yet no one has written with less dogma and more sureness.

Here, briefly, are most of the ideas, facts, and approaches upon which most of the present generation of our history teachers have been brought up. Most of our graduate students have, knowingly or not, learned their history from the Beards. The Beards do not think that historians are debarred from criticism; therefore they impugn many of our habits and ideals. What precisely they want in the way of foreign policy is not clear to me. But that the present trends are disagreeable to them is more than clear. What they find objectionable they do not attribute merely to the New Deal administration: they find that what they call "the breach with historic continentalism" goes back to the days of Mahan, Lodge and the first Roosevelt, who created what the Beards term a "school of aggressive adventurers." There is no gainsaying the fact that the Beards look with loathing upon the idea of America operating as a world power.

Charles Beard regards history as the conflict of ideas and interests evolving and involving in time. It seems to me that this conflict and its periodic, tentative, and pragmatic resolutions are moving in an area profoundly alien to the wishes of the Beards. But I do not see why that fact ought to disqualify the Beards from having an audience. In the meantime it is, surely a wonderful thing that millions of Americans can read their own history at so small a cost.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

Immortal Wife. The Biographical Novel of Jessie Benton Fremont. Irving Stone. Doubleday. $3.00.

IT SEEMED impossible for the Fremonts to live at a normal tempo. They were either heading the procession or were in the ditch; the graph of their fortunes was as erratic as a fever chart.

Jessie was the daughter of Thomas Hart Benton, perennial Senator from Missouri, and her political education began when she was eight. By the time she was sixteen and had eloped with Lt. John Charles Fremont of the Army Topographical Corps, she had been her father's confidential secretary for some years. She proved her determination to take an active part in her husband's career when he was sent to find an easier pass to Oregon and take a look at California, then Mexican territory. Just after the expedition had started down the Missouri, an order came to St. Louis from the War Department relieving Fremont of his command because he had borrowed a howitzer without authorization from Col. Stephen Watts Kearny. But Jessie was a match for the War Department. She realized that a mounted courier could travel faster than the mail boat and despatched this message:

"My dearest, do not delay another day. Trust me and start at once."

"I trust and go," was the answer.

The howitzer was lost en route but Fremont crossed the Rockies for the first time in the winter snows and his report—written by Jessie—made him famous. Because of Fremont's success the War Department forgave Jessie's confessed insubordination and this proved a dangerous precedent. A crisis was imminent with Mexico and Great Britain over California, Texas and Oregon. Fremont had been sent on a scientific expedition by the Army to explore the coast between Oregon and the Gulf of California when a warship delivered him a letter from Jessie saying that George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, had told her he thought the time for compromise was over. Promptly raising the American flag over Santa Anna, Fremont encouraged the American settlers to rebellion and by the time the Army had marched in from New Mexico, Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny found Colonel Fremont had already seized all Southern California and had been appointed Civil Governor by the Naval Commander. Claiming supreme command, Kearny, after stormy scene with Fremont, clinched the argument by bringing him back under arrest for Court Martial in Washington. Although President Polk, reversing the decision of the Court, cleared Fremont of the charge of mutiny and reinstated him in the Army, Fremont, deeply insulted, resigned his commission.

A new chapter of adventures opened in California which John reached over the Rockies while Jessie and her baby braved the jungles of Panama. They met in San Francisco to find their agent had swindled them out of their ranch but that the barren mountain land he had acquired for them was full of gold mines. When Fremont was elected Senator for the new state of California, they returned in triumph to Washington where Jessie dreamed of reigning in a political salon for many years to come; but, alas, there is a tradition that a new state send two senatorial candidates who may draw for the short and long term. John drew the short term—he was Senator for three weeks! During the next six years, Jessie saw her house in San Francisco burned by Vigilantes and her father's house with all his library and manuscripts burn in Washington; was elated when the Duke of Wellington recalled her husband's name in London and finally got word in Nantucket that Fremont had been offered the Democratic nomination for President.

Abolition, however, was, to both John and Jessie, a shibboleth. The Democratic platform included the Fugitive Slave Law. John declined to compromise and was promptly chosen as candidate for the radical Republicans. It was a blow to both Fremonts when Senator Benton

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declared the new party split the country geographically and that he felt it his duty to campaign against his son-in-law to avert a civil war. Fremont refused to campaign for himself. He was beaten at the polls by James Buchanan.

It was back to Fremontville, California, for the Fremonts. Jessie and her daughter were the heroines in a melodramatic clash with the Hornitas League—hijacking miners—and then came the Civil War. John was appointed one of the four Major Generals of the Regular Army with headquarters in St. Louis where Jessie accompanied him as unofficial Adjutant. Everything went wrong. Fremont surrounded himself with former Garibaldian and Hungarian officers; quarreled with the powerful Blair faction and issued an Emancipation Proclamation without consulting the President. Nor did "General Jessie" improve matters by traveling to Washington at John's request and delivering an harangue to Mr. Lincoln on her husband's political sagacity. By the end of three months, Fremont had finally taken to the field when a secret message warned Jessie that an order for his removal was on the way. Once again she determined to circumvent the War Department and this time she was her own courier. Sixty hours later, traveling by rail and horseback, she rode into Fremont's camp to find he planned to attack the enemy at dawn. His fate hung on a victory. Orders were hastily given to double the guards and to allow no messenger through the lines. At midnight a Southern planter was brought to the General's tent, but instead of the promised information about the rebels' lines, he handed the General the fatal document. Fremont's military career was ended. It was "General" Jessie who wrote up the history of the disbanded Zagonyi Hungarian Guard for the relief of their wounded.

Once again Fremont was nominated by the more extreme Republicans but he withdrew from the campaign when he realized that taking votes from Lincoln might elect McClellan as President. John made a new fortune in western railroads and for five years Jessie ruled a great house and salon on the Hudson; then the railroad property vanished like the gold mines and in the bitter end she and John were forced to take shelter with friends. But when John fell ill of pneumonia Jessie wrote eleven stories in five days and earned enough—$1100—to take her husband to Nassau. In 1878, President Hayes appointed Fremont Governor of Arizona but tragically the altitude was too much for Jessie's heart and she was forced to live alone for three years in Staten Island. They had settled themselves in California, and Congress had just awarded Fremont a pension of $6000 for life when he died in New York during a business trip.

The only thing Mr. Stone has not included in his novel is Jessie's widowhood. Granted that a lady who insists on living out a separate scenario every four or five years is not an easy subject. Mr. Stone knows far more about history than fiction. His dialogue is stilted and very often merely biographical explanation between quotation marks, and beyond having Jessie admire her John when he sleeps and run her fingers through his hair when he wakes, his imagination bogs down at romantic detail. Jessie was undoubtedly a brilliant career woman handicapped by a hotheaded and impractical "conquistador" husband, but Mr. Stone's loyalty to her is as devoted as hers to Fremont. Sentiment blindfolds the Comic Muse. What a prize central figure Jessie would make for an American Lytton Strachey!

EUPHEMIA VAN RENSSELAER WYATT.

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Margaret Brent, Adventurer. Dorothy Fremont Grant. Longmans. $2.50.

MRS. GRANT'S is a vigorous pen—witness her "What Other Answer?" and "War Is My Parish." Her first novel combines two richly moving themes, the heroism of English Catholics in penal days and the romance of early Colonial America. Within the framework of historical fact in Stuart England and Maryland between 1638 and 1649, she has created her fiction, a satisfying story both in the immediate drama acted out before the reader and in the interpretation of more remote forces, such as that reaching from Cromwell's England to the far-off Catholic refuge.

As a scrupulous student of history, Mrs. Grant has indicated the source material to which she has had fortunate access and has warned readers about the liberties which she has taken with chronology and with incomplete records. Her very carefulness can explain the handicap under which the first chapters move. Only when the imagination fuses the materials gathered in research, and the story-teller's conscience prevails over the antiquarian's, do we have historical fiction in the highest sense. Happily, Mrs. Grant triumphs fairly soon over the obviousness of her exposition and some self-conscious archaism; then the novel is swift-moving, confident narative.

She is particularly skillful in giving memorable, quick completeness to the dramatic incidents in the eleven tense years the Brents spent in Maryland; and she keeps her many characters distinct and individually interesting. To her heroine, of course, she has given the fullest coloring and the largest measure of her own zestful appreciation. Incidentally, in a time which has made a literary fashion of the masterful, independent woman, it is refreshing to find one who is—in her own word—an "adventurer," not the trite adventuress tricked out as admirable for too laxly tolerant, if not gullible, readers. OLIVE B. WHITE.

Foreign Policy Begins at Home. James P. Warburg. Harcourt. $2.50.

An American Peace. Neil MacNeil. Scribners. $2.75.

A GREAT hysteria—the hysteria of peace-planning—is sweeping the country. All of these proposals, of course, are strikingly public spirited, humane, and world-minded, but nearly all of them are contradictory. Thus, is it possible for anyone to absorb the ever-swelling stream of articles and books proposing methods to end "forever" the problem of war?

Fortunately, the two works under review do not belong to that group of similar works which should be discarded. On the other hand, they are well known to the reviewer who, in the case of Warburg and MacNeil, does not consider himself punished by being requested to render his opinion of two more "peace-planning" studies. And this same reviewer considers MacNeil's book better than that of Warburg. Unfortunately, Warburg wastes much time and space in reviewing the international relations of the world without adding anything new to the well-known picture. But when he shows how modern American foreign and domestic policies are inseparable and that what we are, here at home, conditions and determines what we do as a nation outside of our own borders, he is excellent, for at this point he touches upon the field which is nearly always neglected by less thorough "peace-planners." The sociologist will like also Warburg's particular emphasis upon the conflict between our professed beliefs and our actual behavior; the economist will appreciate his dictum that "true democracy requires an economy 'planned' by society as a whole for the equal benefit of its members, but 'managed' by individual initiative."

MacNeil believes that in this country lies the future of the world; we now have the greatest international authority we shall ever know and we should employ it realistically to effect a peace based on American principles. Pointing out the tragic mistakes of the Versailles Treaty, he calls upon America to cooperate to the fullest with Russia, Britain and other United Nations, to adopt a post-war policy consistent with the ideals of our own democracy, and to utilize our resources for the development of a free world. To him, of the utmost importance in post-war planning is a Bill of Economic Rights to protect the individual and permit all nations to acquire needed raw materials and access to world markets. While the demoniac leaders of the Axis scourge must be punished for their crimes, the conquered peoples should be given a chance to live and learn and some day to take their place in the world community. This can be done if we have a fluid peace settlement; if not, we shall have only a cessation of hostilities. A permanent victory will have to be maintained, however, by military might.

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

Fair Fantastic Paris. Harold Ettlinger. Bobbs-Merrill. $3.00.

THIS pleasant book was finished before his death by Harold Ettlinger, a young newspaperman who, before the fall of France, was working on an American paper published at Paris, probably the Chicago *Tribune*. The assumption is that his experience of the French capital was during the thirties, when the phoney artist and the American summer tourist was a rarer sight in Paris than during the previous decade, with the result that the reputation of our country abroad rose accordingly.

Many books about France and Paris, written by English or American journalists, sin either by a transparent pretentiousness, in the manner of Sisley Huddleston; or else by a kind of boozy nostalgia, almost equally insulting to the writer and to his subject. One is happy to report that Harold Ettlinger's book belongs to neither class. Composed in an attractive, happy-go-lucky idiom, evidently by a man who knew little or nothing of French history or literature, it does reveal a nice sensitivity to the special flavor and atmosphere of contemporary Paris which makes the reading a very agreeable experience. Ettlinger appreciated and liked the Parisian, particularly the type he designates as one of "the Little People," far better than some more solemn and academic student of national character. The sketches of the Halles at midnight; of the little Jewish girl-refugee the author persuaded a Mother Superior to accept as pupil; the hilarious one of Lola Smith, the strip-tease artist, tried for immodesty before a Paris court, are, perhaps, the best in the book, almost all of which is well worth attention.

The more serious chapters are devoted to the Stavisky riots of 1934, and to Léon Blum's Front Populaire of the folowing year; they are entirely sound in viewpoint and dramatically telling in description. Ettlinger makes it quite clear that the riots, represented to us as a moral crusade on the part of royalists, nationalists and communists against the turpitude of the Republic, were simply a synthetic frame-up, heavily financed by fascist and nazi

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forces abroad. Many of the leaders turned frankly traitors in 1941. And the Blum Government was a last attempt to asert the claims of millions of decent, ordinary Frenchmen against the black tide of reaction rising even since the riots. CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

The History of the New Deal. Basil Rauch. Creative Age. $2.50.

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Fray Angelico CHAVEZ sends in his poem from somewhere in the Pacific, where he is serving as an Army chaplain.

J. F. POWERS is a young Chicago writer concerning whom there is a letter in the "Communications" department of this issue. The story we publish here is to appear in Sister Mariella's next anthology.

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